

THE INDIAN RIDDLE

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A SOLUTION SUGGESTED

By
JOHN COATMAN

Professor of Imperial Economic Relations,
University of London.

Late Director of Public Information to the
Government of India.

HUMPHREY TOULMIN
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W.1

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TO those who are in close touch with Indian affairs the apparent lack of interest displayed in them by the people of Great Britain at the end of the first quarter of 1932 is a matter of the greatest surprise, and, also, of the deepest concern. Almost without exception the British Press ignores India, except when an inter-communal riot, or terrorist outrage, or other such uncommon event is noticed. There are, of course, one or two honourable exceptions to this criticism, but, unfortunately, the newspapers concerned are not those which find their way to the hands of the masses of the people of this country. All this is a very striking contrast to the extraordinary interest displayed in the Indian situation by foreign newspapers. A survey of the continental Press and the American newspapers will show almost any day a respectable proportion of their space devoted to the news from India and to discussion of the

Indian situation. Space is given in them to discussion of personalities in Indian politics, particularly, of course, to the all-absorbing subject of Mr. Gandhi, and the progress of events is treated as a thing which concerns the readers of these foreign newspapers because of its importance to the world as a whole. There is no getting away from the fact that a stranger to this planet would, from an examination of its newspapers, imagine that, of all countries, Great Britain was the least concerned in India and what is happening there.

Of course, one reason for the great interest which foreigners take in India today is that in certain quarters there is a good deal of *schadenfreude* in the spectacle of Great Britain in trouble, and nations whose dealings with subject and coloured peoples have not been marked by the liberalism which has been Great Britain's peculiar contribution to this branch of human affairs no doubt like to persuade themselves, that after all, they are just as good as the English people who hitherto have looked down on them from the pedestal of superior virtue. But, apart from this,

it cannot be doubted that foreigners have, on the whole, been quicker than the British people to perceive the world importance of the Indian problem. We are apt to regard it as a problem which is entirely domestic to the British Empire, and, in a sense, this is true. The relations between India and this country are a subject for the consideration primarily of the people of these two countries, and, after them, for the rest of the Empire. Moreover, the British people know that their record in India is one of which they have every reason to be proud, and they are also conscious of the integrity of their intentions in regard to their great dependency. By nature averse from the application of logic to the relations between themselves and the component parts of the Empire, they believe in their hearts that the problem of India's future status in the Empire will work itself out slowly and imperceptibly, and almost automatically, just as the corresponding problems of Canada and the other self-governing Dominions did.

Except in the case of the Irish Free State we have never had to create by one formal, definite act of state an autonomous, self-

governing unit in the Empire, and, after all, by the time the Irish Treaty was signed we had been accustoming ourselves to the idea of Home Rule for Ireland for well over a generation. The most cursory consideration will show how immensely the problem of creating a self-governing dominion out of India differs from the corresponding problem in Ireland, both in scope and in kind. Ireland is much smaller than any of the major Indian provinces and, outside Ulster, has a homogeneous population. India is a sub-continent, inhabited by 350,000,000 people representing many different races and stages of progress. And if the problem of Ireland could not be solved without cutting the country into two pieces, how about India, with its conditions and difficulties so immeasurably more complicated? In a word, the Englishman inevitably looks at the problem of India as a practical problem, following the instinct of his race and the bent of his mind, but foreigners, knowing little, and, very often, caring less about practical difficulties, regard it as a problem of ideal justice. In their eyes, there is an Indian nation which is struggling to be free

and is kept down by a tyrannous Britain. Of course, if this view were true, there would be no problem at all, because 350,000,000 struggling to be free could not be held down by the handful of British troops—60,000 or so—which garrison India. The thing is absurd on the face of it, and still more absurd when we consider that there are hundreds of square miles in India where there is not a single British or even Indian soldier, and within which are found the merest handful even of British civil officers, the greater part of the civil administration being in the hands of Indians. The Indian problem is not so simple as it appears to foreign eyes. It is in essence the problem of how to transfer the government of India from the hands of foreigners to those of their own people.

Nevertheless, there are people in this country, including many whose long, personal acquaintance with Indian affairs entitle them to respect, who deny that any such problem exists. They say that the present demand for Dominion Status in India, together with all the unrest which has accompanied it for the past few years

and still attends it, is only the work of a comparatively few denationalised Indians who have been educated on western lines, many of them in western countries. According to this section of English thought, the vast masses of the Indian people, living in their lonely little villages and hamlets, as their forefathers had done for thousands of years, know and care nothing about the movements of politics and the demand of autonomous government for India which some of their countrymen are pressing so vigorously. Twenty years ago, this would have been perfectly true, and, of course, the Indian villager knows no more about the full meaning and implications of Dominion Status than does the English villager, or, for that matter, the average man in the street in London. But, although he is unversed in the political and metaphysical subtleties connected with the conception of Dominion Status for India, the Indian villager is becoming more and more interested in the agitation which is being carried on for the government of India by Indians. The agitators have seen to that. Year by year, for the past decade, the organisation

of the Indian, Home Rulers, as we may conveniently call the leaders of the Indian Nationalist Movement, has grown in size and in effectiveness, and the arousing of the peasantry from their condition of submissive acceptance of the state of life to which it has pleased God and their rulers to call them is now well in the forefront of their programme. In certain parts of India, notably in the Gujerat tract of the Bombay Presidency, where Mr. Gandhi's home is, and in the United Provinces in the North of India, the peasantry have actually been used as the spear-head of the agitation. And in other parts of India, notably in certain areas in Bihar and Orissa, and in Bengal in the East, signs are not wanting that the traditional acquiescence of the Indian villager in his lot will before long be a thing of the past. But, of course, in doing this, in carrying the political agitation into the peasant classes, the agitators, whose leaders are, for the most part, town-dwelling Brahmins, are creating a Frankenstein's monster which will assuredly destroy them if ever they are left alone face to face with it. We can take it that politics, and,

in particular, the vast section of Indian politics summed up in the term the "Nationalist Movement" does mean something to the masses.

We are all familiar with the phrase the "whispering galleries of the East," but one has got to live in a eastern country to appreciate the full force of the phrase. News, more or less distorted, of everything that happens, flies round an oriental country like India at a most amazing pace. This was true even in the days before newspapers and telegraphs, but now the conductive power of the whispering galleries is magnified many times by these agencies. Many millions of Indians use the railways every month, and the talk in the packed third-class carriages usually turns sooner or later to the doings of the Government and of the national leaders, and there is no Government officer who has not seen the village schoolmaster, or some other educated person, reading a vernacular newspaper to his illiterate companions. Also, experience during the last ten years has proved over and over again that the ignorant masses can be stampeded almost at will by

appeals directed to race-hatred and by the most monstrous mis-statements about the alleged economic exploitation of the country by the British. Of course, the mainspring of all these disturbing activities is the comparatively small handful of educated men, for the most part Hindus, who have absorbed western ideas of national and personal freedom and have made themselves familiar with the struggle for national unity and autonomy in countries like Italy and Egypt, where conditions were vastly different from their own. But this has been true of every such movement throughout history. In our own country, at the time of the Civil War, it cannot be imagined that the villagers and the farmers who formed Cromwell's New Model Army held burning views on the subject of ship money and the status of the House of Commons over against King Charles. They were moved by religious fervour or personal loyalty to leaders whom they had known or followed in other things all their lives, and by other motives which had little or nothing to do with politics. And so it is in India to-day. We have therefore got to ask ourselves

whether the Indian Nationalist Movement, as we know it to-day, is a genuine movement or if it is merely the work of a few self-seeking agitators.

Now, a study of the history of British India will leave no doubt in the mind of any competent observer that the foundations of the Indian Nationalist Movement are deep and genuine, that the movement itself is one of a type which we have encountered before in our Imperial history, and that it will ultimately achieve its aim, which is the establishment of an autonomous government in India. The mere subjection of all British India to one strong central government, which is also the suzerain power of the rest of India, namely, that comprised within the boundaries of the many Indian States ruled by their own princes, *ipso facto* confers at any rate the formal characteristics of nationality on India. The rapid spread of modern systems of communications throughout the length and breadth of India, which is one of the outstanding achievements of the British Government in India, by making the country into one closely-knit economic

unit has strengthened these formal attributes of nationality. With the spread of western education in India, and particularly knowledge of the English language, India has been given something more than the mere formal or material attributes of nationality. She has been given what she never had before, namely, a common language, and, to a large extent, a common set of ideals of national and personal liberty to be striven for. More than this; by a series of successive political reforms the principles of democratic government have been introduced into the government of India, and over two or three generations the people of the country have become accustomed to their use, and inevitably they have conceived the desire for their further extension. The growth of international trade, the ever-increasing facilities for foreign travel, and the ubiquity of the press correspondent, with all these other factors have combined to bring India fully into the life of the comity of nations, and, in fact, to the outside world, India is like any other nation, except in the one important particular that the control of her governments rests, in the

last resort, not in the hands of her own people but in those foreigners.

The importance of world opinion in relation to India should not be overlooked, because nowadays this is one of the factors at work moulding our policy towards our great dependency. Obviously we cannot allow ourselves to be guided entirely by the opinion of the outside world, because, as we saw earlier on, in some respects it is biassed and dishonest opinion, and in others it is based on a mistaken appreciation of the situation in India. But, equally obviously, we cannot merely ignore it, because if we try to do so we shall quickly find it reacting on us in matters which have no connection with India. And, after all, this foreign view of India as a nation in all respects except her possession of autonomy in her own government has a certain correspondence with the truth of the situation. Only, it does leave out of account some elements of fundamental importance in the Indian situation which we English keep very much in the forefront of our minds. However that may be, the moral and material progress of India over a long course of

years, the ideas and aspirations of large numbers of her leading citizens, and, finally, a growing concensus of opinion in the world outside the British Empire have all combined to give India many of both the formal and spiritual attributes of nationality, and thus the Nationalist Movement in India, that is, the Movement for Dominion Status within the British Empire, is a genuine nationalist movement and must be regarded as such.

This clears the air considerably, because by accepting this fact simply and definitely we enable ourselves to formulate the problem which we have to solve, and by "we" I mean the people of Great Britain and India together. Indeed, part of the solution is already accomplished since it has now been announced on behalf of His Majesty's Government that the ultimate goal of India's political progress is Dominion Status. This announcement was made by Lord Irwin in October, 1929, and it has since been confirmed by the proceedings of the Round Table Conference. Before Lord Irwin made his announcement, the goal of India's political development was

as stated by the late Mr. Montagu in 1917, namely, responsible self-government to be attained by successive stages. But between responsible self-government and Dominion Status in its latest form as contained in the Statute of Westminster, there is a whole world of difference. Responsible self-government of India could be compatible with a very large measure of control over her affairs by the British Government. This control could theoretically be exercised even in India's internal domestic affairs, and certainly could be fully exercised over her foreign and defence policies. Dominion Status, of course, is complete autonomy and postulates fully equal status with Great Britain.

It is just as well that people in this country should realise clearly that this enormous principle of Dominion Status for India has been conceded, and that with its concession vanishes a great range of controversy which has embittered relations in the past and has confused thought and clouded vision both here and in India. Henceforward, any dispute which there may be will not take place in regard to the

right or otherwise of India to attain to Dominion Status, but will confine itself to the more practical and more tangible problem of the how and the when of her advance to the ultimate goal.

^ This is the problem which is now before us. It is this which is exercising the minds of political leaders in this country and in India. From now onwards, we have got to undertake the actual work of the transfer of power and control from one set of hands to another. The work bristles with the most formidable and imminent difficulties and dangers at every step. It would be strange if it were not so, for India, with its great size, wonderful variety of conditions, both natural and artificial, and its bewildering racial, social, religious and economic differences faces us with a problem which seems almost too big and complicated to be encompassed by the human mind. Of one thing we can be absolutely certain, and that is that there is no simple, easy solution to it. The practical problem which faces us now may be likened to that concerning builders who are replacing the foundations of a great building. Obviously they can-

not take away all the old foundations at once, or the building crashes in ruins. Therefore, they remove the foundations bit by bit, underpinning the building at the point at which they are working until the new foundation there is securely laid. And thus they continue, bit by bit. The solution of the Indian political problem will, in fact, be a vast empirical process spread out over years. Each step which we take towards the solution will be taken in the guise of some tangible measure of administrative change and reform, in the guise in fact, in which the British genius for practical affairs is seen at its best. This is the way in which our former colonies advanced to their present status. None of their constitutions contained the words Dominion Status, and, once more excluding Southern Ireland, there has never been at any time in their history a sudden and dramatic revolution in their relations with the Mother Country. This rule will certainly hold good for India, because nothing dramatic or sweeping is compatible with safety. The one great creative ideal which emerged from the Round Table Conference,

namely, that of a federation of All-India, including both British India and the Indian States, is a very good example of all this. At first sight it may appear that this ideal does represent a sudden and dramatic revolution in the relations between India and Great Britain, because the formation of the All-India Federation will be accompanied by the devolution of a very wide measure of autonomy on the Federal Government. Actually, however, the proposed All-India Federation, containing as it will the powerful conservative element of the Indian Princes and representing the more responsible and stable elements in the Indian Provinces, will be an organisation which will carry on naturally from the old regime and take India safely over the gap between the present system of government and Dominion Status.

But, of course, there are the most formidable difficulties in the way of the creation of this new federation, difficulties which arise from every one of the three main parties to it, namely, the British people, the people of British India, and the Indian Princes. The most cursory acquaintance

with the proceedings of the two sessions of the Round Table Conference which have so far been held will show the scope and kind of the difficulties referred to. In this country there is a strong section of opinion which is not yet reconciled to the ideal of ultimate Dominion status for India and cannot at present be induced to declare in favour of granting to the proposed Federal Government that degree of immediate autonomy which is necessary to induce not only political leaders in British India to support it, but, also, the Princes. For it must be remembered that the Princes acknowledge as their suzerain only the British Crown. In the domestic affairs of their States they are autonomous, and therefore they are not prepared to merge any of their rights and powers in a common government of All-India which will be controlled by British officials responsible ultimately to the British Parliament. A government of India on which they are to form an organic part, must therefore, be an autonomous government, subject only to those limitations which are found to be necessary to safeguard the rights of Great

Britain, the welfare of India herself, and the position of the minority communities inside India. Also, and this is a matter in regard to which they feel even more strongly than they do about joint control of their internal affairs by British officials, they will not give to the Indian politicians of British India any measure of control in the more important departments of government within their States. Further, certain great States like Hyderabad are not prepared to enter the Federation on exactly the same terms as much smaller and feebler States, and the harmonising of conflicting views on this point is not going to be a very simple matter. But undoubtedly the most difficult part of the whole problem is that provided by the division of the people of British India itself into rival or hostile communities. To those familiar with Indian conditions at first hand this aspect of Indian life has always been recognised as one of the principal difficulties in the way of the growth of a truly homogeneous Indian nation, and, consequently, in the way of India's advance to full autonomous government.

Many Indian political leaders, particularly among the Hindus, on the other hand have consistently underrated the strength of this particular obstacle, or at any rate have professed to believe that the inter-communal differences in India, more especially, of course, the Hindu-Muslim differences, owe their strength and importance to the Machiavellian policy of the British rulers who have taken the old Roman motto of "divide and rule" as their guide. The Nationalist press in India has sedulously fostered this view of inter-communal antagonisms for years, and, undoubtedly, there are large numbers of people in India and elsewhere who believe, quite sincerely, that the British are deliberately keeping the different communities apart and have been inciting them to enmity in order to perpetuate their own rule in India. It is astonishing that such a belief could sustain even a moment's calm and critical examination, for it is surely obvious that the task of keeping these scores of millions of people of different communities and interests and points of view permanently embroiled with each other is one which would surpass the

powers of any human beings. The plain truth is that it is quite impossible to play with and control such mighty forces as are represented by the inter-communal antagonisms in India. But, if any proof were ever needed that the British have not in fact been carrying on any such Machiavellian policy, it has surely been provided by the whole development of Indian politics within the last few years, by the proceedings at both sessions of the Round Table Conference, and by what has happened in India since the latest session of the Conference adjourned. It is not unfair to say that the key note in Indian politics since the inauguration of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms ten years ago has been Hindu-Muslim rivalry, and, lately, rivalry between the majority community of the Hindus and other minority communities as well as the Muslims. The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms opened a new era in Indian history, for they were avowedly the first step towards responsible self-government for India.

In spite of what critics have alleged against them, and in spite of their apparently somewhat meagre and disappointing

results, the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms have proved to be an enormous stimulus to political life and organisation in India, and, also, have provided a considerable amount of political education for many classes of the India people. In a word, with these Reforms politics in India acquired a certain reality which they had hitherto lacked. Particularly in the Provinces, where the system known as dyarchy put the administration of certain departments actually under the control of Indian ministers, chosen from and responsible to the Provincial Legislatures, political life and political warfare became very real things, because success at the polls led to a successful party leader's elevation to a ministerial post and therewith to wide powers of administrative control, to considerable scope for nation-building work, and, also, to the handling of a good deal of patronage. As time went on, the different party leaders who were at the head of parties mainly organised on a communal basis saw that there was much valuable work to be done in consolidating the position of their parties in preparation for the next step in political reforms, which,

presumably, would devolve still more power on Indian legislatures and Indian ministers chosen therefrom. And since the parties, as we have seen, were for the most part organised on a communal basis, this led to constant accentuation of inter-communal rivalry, and, in particular, to ever-sharper antagonism between Hindus and Muslims.

For the Muslims saw that the institution of autonomous democratic government in India, based on the English Parliamentary model, with its central doctrine of majority rule, would put them permanently in a minority in the central government and in the governments of most of the Provinces. They feared, therefore, that the future Government of India would, in fact, be controlled by Hindus and would, perhaps unconsciously, but, nevertheless, inevitably foster Hindu interests and extend Hindu ideas and culture to the detriment of the non-Hindu communities. They therefore undertook, on the one hand, to organise themselves for effective political action in defence of their own interests, and, on the other hand, to define the objectives towards

which their policy should be directed. Throughout the last ten years, Muslim leaders have met with various vicissitudes and there has been a good deal of division in their ranks and many personal quarrels, but, on the whole, these years have witnessed a steady advance towards Muslim solidarity and a continuous clarification and definition of the conditions which they believe to be essential to their safety in any future autonomous and democratically governed India. In essence, the Muslim demands have crystallised into a policy having as its objective the transformation of the Indian Provinces, now existing or to be created, into political units as autonomous as the American or Australian States. Within these States they are quite prepared to accept all the implications of Parliamentary government, provided that the present system of communal electorates is retained. Under the existing electoral system in India, broadly speaking, Muslim representatives are elected to the various legislative bodies from constituencies composed entirely of Muslim voters, whilst Hindus are elected from general constituencies, that is, con-

stituencies in which the voters are non-Muslims and non-Europeans.

When it is realised that the Muslims are in a definite majority in Bengal and the Punjab and in an overwhelming majority in the North-West Frontier Province and Sind, it will be seen that their demands postulate the perpetuation of Muslim control over a large and important part of India. These demands are strenuously opposed by the vast majority of Hindus, who take the line that they will lead to the permanent dismemberment of India, and would make the above-mentioned Northern and North-western Provinces into an Indian Ulster. For this reason they will have nothing to do with them. But every month that passes appears to strengthen the Muslims in their position, and the differences between them and the Hindus have undoubtedly become deep and fundamental. Throughout the whole course of the Round Table Conference proceedings hitherto, Hindu-Muslim differences and the search for a satisfactory solution of them have proved to be the most important pre-occupation of the majority of Indian dele-

gates. The most genuine and intensive efforts on the part of Hindu, Muslim, and British leaders alike, all proved unequal to the task of finding the desired solution, and since the adjournment of the second session of the Conference last December further conversations in India between communal leaders have merely brought matters to a complete deadlock. As far as we can see at present there is no chance of any further advance along the lines of Hindu-Muslim negotiations, and, in fact, representative spokesmen of the Muslims have formally asked His Majesty's Government to find a settlement of the matters in dispute between them and the Hindus.

This demand, of course, arises out of the promise given by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, when adjourning the second session of the Round Table Conference, that inter-communal differences would not be allowed to hold up the progress of political reforms for India, and that, if necessary, "His Majesty's Government would be compelled to apply a provisional scheme." This promise is likely to develop into a source of serious embarrassment for His Majesty's Govern-

ment, 'because,' when the Hindu-Muslim differences are examined, they are seen to be literally fundamental. The dispute is in regard to the actual location of the control of government, either in Moslem hands or in Hindu hands. The Muslim proposals as we have seen, would give them, in effect, complete and possibly permanent control over the government of the North and North-West of India, whilst leaving the Hindus in control of the rest of the country. It is very difficult to see how any arbitration can possibly satisfy either side. For example, whatever else may be decided, if the system of communal electorates is abrogated the Muslims will oppose the decision. On the other hand, no matter what the decision may be, the Hindus will not accept it unless the separate communal electorate is abrogated, or, at any rate, unless a definite term is set to its future existence. Similarly, it would be, to say the least, unwise to assume that the Muslims will agree to any arrangement which does not give them the actual substance of power in the Punjab, Bengal, the North-West Frontier and Sind. Again, such a consum-

mation would be no doubt as violently opposed by the Hindus, not only of the Provinces concerned but of other parts of India. Of course, the British Government is in a very awkward dilemma here, because it is quite certain that they cannot go on with the reforms unless some sort of *modus vivendi* is reached in the matter of the rival Hindu-Muslim claims. But, as we have seen, any attempt to redeem the pledge given by the Prime Minister in his farewell address to the Conference last December is indeed a most formidable undertaking.

Nevertheless, the ideal of an All-India Federation, which, as we saw, was the one great creative off-spring of the Round Table Conference, is a thing of inestimable value to all of us, both British and Indian, who are practically concerned with the working out of the political future of India. For it stands as a goal which not even the most extreme Indian Nationalist or the most hidebound British reactionary can decry or deride. At last we have got something stable where hitherto all too much has been unstable and shifting. But, it cannot be too often repeated, at present it is hardly

more than an ideal. Some of the main difficulties in the way of its realisation we have already seen, and the mighty forces, the ancient traditions, the deep-seated prejudices, the hostile interests of various kinds of which these obstacles are the embodiment are brought into play at every step when we try to transform our ideal into the shape of a constitution and a body of administrative machinery. Hardly a meeting of the two sessions of the Round Table Conference failed to illustrate this saying. The differences and difficulties existing between the separate Indian communities, and, to a lesser degree, the differences between the ideas of the Princes and those of the British Indian political leaders, and between the latter and the British representatives, occupy the attention of onlookers almost exclusively. In consequence, there is a disposition in many quarters to believe that these political differences of the first magnitude can be solved by a political manœuvre on the part of the British Government, provided that it is conceived on a sufficiently large and generous scale.

Both in India and in this country there

are many who think that if Great Britain would concede full Dominion Status to India immediately, the differences between the communities in British India and between the Princes and the British Indian politicians would disappear, if not automatically, at any rate speedily and finally. It is thought that in the presence of the British rulers of India neither Princes, nor Hindu, nor Muslim leaders have the necessary freedom of action to be able to compose their differences along the lines of reciprocal concessions, made on behalf of that Indian nationalism in which they all so firmly believe and towards which they so fervently aspire. This is not the whole truth, even if the people holding these views were right in believing that it is the presence of the British which keeps responsible and accredited leaders of the various interests from coming to an agreement. On the contrary, the existence of the major differences which we are now discussing has, through long years and centuries, led to the growth of conditions on all sides of public, and, even, of private life in India, presenting innumerable minor problems, which, in

conjunction, are almost as formidable an obstacle to agreement as the great causes themselves from which they spring.

The varying aptitudes of the peoples of India in respect, for example, of education, and all forms of economic activity, have led to a distribution of wealth, of employment in Government and other public service, and so on, and, above all, to a distribution of control in respect of present and future opportunities in these spheres which face us with a whole host of most formidable practical difficulties. For example, the allocation of posts in the numerous public services cannot proceed on the basis of free and open competition conducted by means of examinations or other tests as in this country. Experience has shown that this can only lead to an absolutely overwhelming proportion of Hindu entries into the services in question, and, even, that the Hindus of certain provinces tend to establish a monopoly at the expense of the Hindus of other provinces. Thus, recruitment to the public service becomes immediately in India a matter of high politics, because it has been made an important part of the

inter-communal claims and^o disputes. The Government of India has been able, as an obviously neutral authority by virtue of its British control, to draw up rules regulating this matter. The rules have not given complete satisfaction, because such a consummation passes human ingenuity, and, in fact, all the parties concerned have complained against their operation. In this one matter alone, which elsewhere is no more than a problem of the mechanics of administration, there is a whole peck of troubles for would-be framers of an Indian constitution. The minority communities want their claims in this regard to be incorporated in the constitution itself, and it seems very likely that some more or less definite and binding agreement will have to be reached between the conflicting interests before a new constitution can be framed. The appointment of public service commissions for All-India and for the different Indian provinces will not in itself solve this particular problem, as we know from experience. The Indian Public Service Commission has now been in operation for about six years, and it has to func-

tion in compliance with the rules above mentioned drawn up by the Government of India.

Much of the same sort of problems are bound to arise as between the subjects of Indian States and the citizens of the British India provinces when federal cadres come to be appointed. And so we could go on in many other instances. The point to be grasped here is that constitution-making for India is not only a matter of the discussion and settlement of broad political and constitutional principles. There are all manner of minor and apparently trivial administrative details which, because of the peculiar conditions existing in India, attain the status and assume the importance of principles. All this has been clearly shown by the proceedings of the Round Table Conferences, and long before them in innumerable debates in the various legislatures and local bodies in India, and in the resolutions of communal and other sectional bodies. Thus, though we have got the ideal, we cannot, we must not, expect it to be speedily realised. If we do, we shall be disappointed, and it may be that disap-

pointment will lead to disheartenment, and, perhaps, even to the abandonment ultimately of the glowing vision of All-India Federation in return for something humbler and altogether of less promise and less appeal.

For, consider the experience of other British Dominions in their advance to federation. In particular, consider the experience of Canada and Australia. Even to-day, both these countries have populations which are microscopic in comparison with that of India. Moreover, the population of Australia is all but homogeneous, whilst the differences between the French and British in Canada, deep, natural, and lasting though they are, dwindle almost into insignificance when compared with the differences which exist in India. Moreover in the case of Canada, there has been, throughout her history, a powerful, imminent incentive to national unity and consolidation provided by the presence over her southern border of a mighty foreign country, many of whose people cherished for years the ambition of incorporating Canada within their own boundaries. For

Canada, federation and the strengthening and consolidation of all her human and natural resources were literally a matter of life and death. Yet, in spite of this, her progress to federation was neither easy nor rapid, and with Newfoundland—which essentially is one of her maritime provinces—remaining outside, the Federation is still incomplete. Australia, with no such external urge towards federation as Canada felt, except during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, and then in a much weaker form, took many years longer than Canada to reach the goal which so many of her most patriotic citizens cherished as their ideal.

Consider, too, how simple the problem of federation in these two Dominions was as compared with the problem which now faces India. They had small populations, simple economic systems—at the time of their federation, that is—and in Australia absolutely, and in Canada comparatively, homogeneous racial elements. Moreover, apart from certain matters which seem absolutely trifling and insignificant when compared with their Indian analogues, the

question of the relations between the new federations and the United Kingdom presented no difficulties. Even in 1867, when Canada federated, and, of course, still more so in 1901 when the Australian Federation was inaugurated, it was quite clear that the terms on which the Dominions would remain inside the British Empire would ultimately be set by themselves.

Contrast with all this the conditions of the problem of an All-India Federation to-day. Apart from the heterogeneity of her population, with the many deep and fundamental differences to which this gives rise, as we have already seen, we have the spectacle of a large number of quasi-independent, autocratic rulers of multitudinous gradations of power and importance who have to be fitted in to the same federal scheme as the British provinces which have already advanced an appreciable distance along the road to responsible government of a democratic, parliamentary type. And, lastly, we have the presence of a third party to the compact, namely, Great Britain, which is the controlling power over the whole Government of India,

as she was not in the case of the Australian and Canadian colonies. Great Britain is not yet prepared to stand aside and let the Indian people settle the terms on which they will stay in the Empire. Great Britain has, in fact, certain rights and claims which she is not prepared to abandon. Here, then, is another complexity in the Indian riddle and another element making for delay rather than speed in the achievement of an All-India Federation.

At the present moment, that is, the beginning of May, 1932, it is impossible for anybody to say that the answer to the riddle has been carried any farther than it was by the Round Table Conference. If anything, the whole thing has become more obscure than ever by what has happened in India since the second session of the Round Table Conference adjourned last December. While Mr. Gandhi was in England, the Working Committee of the All-India National Congress, that is, the executive body of the organised left wing movement in India, perforce had to abstain from overt action. Without Mr. Gandhi none of the Congress leaders had anything

like enough influence with the masses to lead a widespread civil disobedience movement. Nevertheless, the Working Committee was not merely marking time. Most of its members knew well enough that Mr. Gandhi could not obtain at the Round Table Conference anything like the full demands which Congress had made in the past. For example, at a special session of the All-India National Congress held at Karachi, not long before Mr. Gandhi sailed for England, a mandate for him, as the sole representative of the All-India National Congress, had been drawn up and he had been charged with the mission of delivering this to the British Government. The mandate, in effect, demanded complete independence immediately for India. It was no wonder, therefore, that the members of the Working Committee of Congress knew that Mr. Gandhi would report on his arrival in India that, as far as his mandate was concerned, his mission had been a failure.

From this, various important consequences would flow. In the first place, Mr. Gandhi must inevitably suffer some

loss of prestige, which would mean that his stature would be reduced to something more nearly approaching equality with his fellow Congress leaders than ever before. Thus, even if Mr. Gandhi himself had been unwilling to revive the civil disobedience movement, even after his disappointment in England, certain of his colleagues would have found themselves in a position to do so without his co-operation. There is no need to ask ourselves how far this position had been deliberately planned by certain Congress leaders, or whether Mr. Gandhi would or would not have led another civil disobedience movement had he not been so promptly imprisoned. There are reasons for believing that Mr. Gandhi either would not have undertaken such a movement, or, if he had, that he would have done so with the greatest reluctance and only under pressure from others. This, however, is only one reading of the situation, because Mr. Gandhi's actions have always been very difficult to calculate, and those observers may be right who believe that he intended to revive non-co-operation and civil disobedience. But, whatever the

truth of this may be, it is perfectly certain that the other Congress leaders would have revived the civil disobedience movement, and even if Lord Willingdon had consented to see Mr. Gandhi he could still not have prevented trouble from breaking out. •It is just possible—but only just possible—that he had seen Mr. Gandhi, the latter might personally have been kept out of the movement which would thus have started under a very heavy handicap. Here, however, we are in the realm of speculation, whereas Lord Willingdon had to deal with the hard facts of the situation.

The end of 1931 found India at the end of a brief lull, following on over a year of intensive disorder marked by riot, murder, armed uprisings, and brutal and cowardly assassinations of devoted public servants, all these things being the direct outcome of Mr. Gandhi's renewal of civil disobedience in the Spring of 1930. At the end of December, 1929, a skilful and determined attempt to assassinate Lord Irwin had been made near Delhi, and the progress of the 1930-31 unrest was marked by the events at Chittagong and Peshawar, which are

two of the most serious incidents which have occurred in India since the upheaval of 1919. In Chittagong, armed revolutionaries raided an arms depot belonging to the auxiliary force, killed a British sergeant-major and some Indian public servants, and got away with a number of rifles. In Peshawar, the control of the city actually passed for some days into the hands of the insurgent mob and the state of affairs on the British side of the border encouraged certain of the trans-border Afridis to raid in force into the Peshawar district of British India. In many parts of India throughout this period of unrest the administration, and particularly the police, had been subjected to an unparalleled strain, and, to say the least, it would have been in the highest degree dangerous had the administration been subjected to a renewal of the same sort of strain. In criticising the present policy of the Government of India this should be remembered, because there is much validity in the claim that Lord Willingdon and his advisers after all were acting on the principle that prevention is better than cure.

There is no reason to disbelieve that had such vigorous action not been taken against Mr. Gandhi and the other Congress leaders and their followers a period of agitation and violent upheaval, at least comparable to that of 1930-31, and, in all likelihood, far surpassing it, would have supervened. Moreover, the kind of action taken, namely, by the issue of acts of extraordinary legislation known as ordinances, is not merely arbitrary. One of the sections in the Government of India Act of 1919, which is, of course, the "Constitution" of India, gives the Governor-General the right to issue such acts of extraordinary legislation on his authority whenever he deems that the safety and welfare of India demands them. But, of course, the ordinance is a weapon par excellence for a temporary emergency and should not be employed a moment longer than is absolutely necessary. Also, its action should be strictly localised and should be effectively supervised by responsible officials at every stage. At the present moment, certain parts of India are being practically governed by ordinance, and this is a serious and unsatisfactory state

of affairs. However unimpeachable the motives of governments may be, and however loyally subordinate officials may strive to administer the ordinances with moderation and with the minimum of disturbance and annoyance to all law-abiding citizens, some abuses are certain to creep in, and, also, the hit-or-miss element cannot be entirely expunged from such rough-and-ready executive action as this.

Thus, there is no reason to doubt that, in some cases, subordinate officials have abused their power and have turned the ordinances to base uses. Also, it cannot be denied that large numbers of people representing some of the very best elements in society, and actuated by the highest motives have, through the ordinances, come into conflict with the authorities and have been sent to prison or suffered other penalties of a distressing and objectionable sort. Also, there is a section of opinion, both inside and outside India, which would have no objection to perpetuating government by ordinance, if this were possible, and the paralysis of Left Wing activity in India at the present moment has been loudly pro-

claimed as the pacification of India and the restoration of a satisfactory state of public affairs by some people who ought to know better.

The trouble with the present ordinances in India is that they solve no problems. They cannot even hold the present position stable. For, however foolish and wrong the actions of Congress leaders have been in the recent past, the All-India National Congress is the spear-head of a nationalist movement and is a genuine, well-organised and popular political party. That is to say that it and its ideals are permanent and cannot be driven out of existence by ordinances, as could the terrorist associations or any of the similar underworld growths which present a government with a problem at once definite and limited in scope, and one in the solution of which they will be aided by, or at least have the sympathy of, all right-minded citizens. Now, in the present case, there is simply no room to doubt that whatever the arguments for or against the ordinances may be, they have, to some extent, alienated from the Government the sympathies of those moderate

sections of political opinion which have in the past, with only rare exceptions, co-operated with them. Beneath the calm produced by the ordinances, passions are held in leash, and moderates, already handicapped by their very moderation, are feeling that whatever influences they may have possessed at one time is rapidly dwindling to vanishing point. It is often said that the support of the moderates in India is not a thing of any great value to the Government of India. Those who say this argue that moderate doctrines make no appeal to the masses anywhere, and particularly in India, where illiteracy and ignorance are so prevalent. Further, such critics allege, and with truth, that the moderate leaders in India have no strong popular following, and in any trial of strength with the Congress men they must go to the wall. But this is only one side of the case. Throughout the whole post-war period, that is, since the coming of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms and the consequent growth of real political life in India, the attitude of moderate politicians in India has been of great value not only

to the Government of India but to the cause of peace and orderly government generally. Putting it at the very lowest, moderate leaders, men like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. Sastri, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, and Sir Sivaswami Aiyar, do give moral support of which the value is not to be reckoned by counting heads or the control of votes in a legislature. Few as the moderate leaders are, they possess a store of wisdom, of knowledge, and of true patriotism, which, if it could be weighed in a balance, would probably be found to be greater than that of the far more numerous and noisy politicians on their Left. And at critical periods of Indian post-war history the courageous adherence to their own standards and ideals of these men has proved of incalculable benefit to the Government and to their country.

For example, it is very difficult to see how the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms could have come into operation in 1921 against the bitter opposition of Mr. Gandhi and Congress and also a very large and influential section of Muslims, had it not been for the moderate leaders and their

followers all over India. These men withstood appeals and threats at a time when popular passion was running with incredible force. By entering the reformed legislatures and working the new institutions to the best of their ability they helped to lay the foundations of the new order of government so deeply and so soundly that, although it was shaken by the fierce political storms which raged later, it could not be destroyed. Indeed, it is possible to argue that, given the attitude of the moderates in 1920, the boycott of the new legislatures by Congress and other extremists was a good thing for India. For it was precisely the men who were most learned in constitutional precedents elsewhere, particularly in England, and who were most thoroughly imbued with the principle of progress by constitutional methods who found themselves entrusted with the duty of setting their stamp on the first real constitution which India has had and of giving it a character which it will never wholly lose.

These are some of the considerations which must be present in our minds when

we try to understand what the significance of the growing alienation between moderates and Government in India means for the country and its future. Of course, all this is present to the mind of Lord Willingdon but his dilemma is truly a desperate one. He is bound to use all the possible means at his command to avoid another civil disobedience campaign because each of these, like an attack of some wasting disease, leaves the patient—in this case, India and her Government—weaker than before. As long as there is a strong organised party in India, determined to use all methods, however unconstitutional, to achieve their objective, the power of ordinance-making must remain and must, from time to time, be applied. Yet, as we have seen, ordinances cannot be promulgated without producing effects far outside the field in which they are meant to act. Moreover, the use of ordinances in the future will produce even more deplorable effects than their use at the present, and we must expect the reaction to them to be increasingly violent and destructive. At all costs we must avoid getting into a

position, or into a frame of mind, in which we shall regard the ordinance as a normal instrument of policy or one whose use is not to be deplored. We must, on the other hand, realise clearly that it is an instrument which ought not to be applied except in the most serious circumstances.

Now, we have got to face the fact quite frankly that unless there is some form of real responsible government in India, a form of government in which Indians can control their own internal affairs, conditions like the present will always recur, and at some date, which is perhaps not far off in the future, will become endemic. But, of course, to say this is to solve nothing, for the question of the application of the institutions of responsible government to India brings us back again to all those formidable difficulties of internal conditions and external relations which we considered earlier in this study. Before the Round Table Conference, during its meetings, and since the adjournment of its second session last December, one possible solution which has been most often propounded is the application of responsible government in

the provinces whilst the form of government at the Centre is left approximately unchanged. The most important part of the Simon Commission's proposals is, in effect, just this. But the kind of provincial autonomy suggested in that Report has not found favour with any section of Indian opinion, because it is hedged round by a number of safeguards which, to Indian minds, are so restrictive as to destroy real autonomy.

During the Round Table Conference itself, the Muslims gradually concentrated their attention more and more on the provincial aspect of the new Indian constitution and are quite prepared to accept immediate provincial autonomy—but of a particular kind—in advance of responsibility at the Centre. In fact, important sections of Muslim opinion do not want any speedy advance towards autonomy at the Centre, because they know that the hard facts of arithmetic will put them in a permanent minority there. In the provinces the Muslims want autonomy as complete as it is in an American or Australian State, and they want it free of the safeguards proposed

in the Simon Report and based, as we have seen, on the system of separate electorates. Generally speaking, the Hindus strongly oppose this point of view and demand simultaneous advance, both at the Centre and in the provinces. During the meetings of the Consultative Committee, chosen from among the leading delegates to the Round Table Conference, which has been conferring with the Viceroy in the interval since the adjournment of the Conference, these positions were maintained by both sides. In consequence, as is well known, something like a deadlock has occurred, and the vitally important matters in issue between the two communities have now been referred to the Prime Minister for settlement. There is not the least doubt that the greater part of British opinion, both in this country and in India, would prefer to advance by successive stages to the full scheme of responsible federal government for All-India, and take the first step immediately by the creation of autonomous provinces.

Undoubtedly there is a good deal to be said for this, but there are very great difficulties in the way of accepting this

solution. In the first place, there is the very important circumstance that at present, at any rate, the greater part of Hindu opinion is not prepared to accept it. Also, it is very difficult, from a theoretical point of view, to understand how there can be any real autonomous government in the provinces whilst the central government is still left non-responsible and bureaucratic in composition. However much the work of government and the day to day administration is left with the provinces, there must still be large tracts of important national affairs which can by no possible arrangement be left with any authority but the national government. Defence, foreign relations, currency and financial policy, customs, income-tax, and other important forms of taxation, certain sections of civil and criminal justice, and so on, are examples of these. Now, all of these important subjects of government which have just been mentioned concern the well-being of the whole country in its most vital aspects, and the material welfare of every citizen depends, and must depend, very largely on the policy and conduct of the

central government. It can hardly be denied, that possibilities of the most intense and dangerous friction between responsible provincial governments and the non-responsible central government would arise daily. Disputes of a fundamental character could not be avoided, and, apart from the fact that the central government would not have the same sanction of popular support for its doings as the provincial governments would have, the mere circumstance that the provinces could be over-ridden in matters of such importance by a non-responsible, bureaucratic central government would, in effect, derogate enormously from their autonomy, if, indeed, the latter were not thereby destroyed.

Thus, we come again to another formidable dilemma. The Government of India in its dispatch on the proposals contained in the Simon Commission's Report sought to escape from this dilemma by proposing that whilst the central government should be left non-responsible it should be made far more "responsive" than it is at present, by the inclusion in the Viceroy's Executive Council, which corresponds in India to the

Cabinet in this country, of three representative Indians, enjoying popular support and confidence. Undoubtedly, Lord Irwin and his Government, in making this proposal, had in mind the possibility that this "responsiveness" would develop easily and naturally into responsibility. This might have been the development, of course, but there cannot be any certainty in the matter. It is just as likely that the Indian political leaders of the front rank would not enter the Government of India on such terms, or that if they did they would find that their influence and following would speedily disappear. For it must be remembered that they would be invited by the Viceroy to become members of an Executive Council which would still be as non-responsible as the present one to the Legislature. Certainly, the All-India National Congress and the centre parties in Indian politics would be just as hostile to such a form of government as they are to the present form.

Frankly, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that if circumstances make it absolutely impossible for a measure of real responsibility to be introduced into the

Government of India it would be better to leave the provinces alone. But as this stalemate would not be entertained for a moment by any of the parties to the Round Table Conference we are driven back to the attempt to find some way of solving our difficulty at the Centre. The Government of India's plan of making itself more responsive will not do, for the reasons which we have seen. Dyarchy, on the model of the existing provincial governments, has been suggested from time to time in various quarters. The unique and characteristic feature of dyarchy is that some of the members of the Government are responsible for the administration of their departments to the Legislature concerned, whilst others are responsible, through the official hierarchy of Governor of the Province, Governor-General in Council, and Secretary of State for India, ultimately to the British Parliament. There are reasons for believing that a few years ago dyarchy at the Centre might have been an acceptable solution to the majority of Indian politicians no matter to which community they belonged. But now it is certainly not

practicable. It would receive the support of only few Hindus or Muslims, and the difficulties in its working which have been experienced in most provinces would be much magnified and made more intense by the conditions at the Centre. •

Moreover—and this may be the guiding consideration in any suggestions for the organisation of the Government of India henceforth—anything suggested must fit in with the ideal of an ultimate Federation of All-India. We must avoid anything which will fix the lines of political organisation and party alignments and programmes in British India in such a manner that the Indian States, when they ultimately come into the organic political connection with British India which is contemplated, will find it hard to accommodate themselves to these lines. Whatever we might have done, even three years ago, in regard to the future government of British India, cannot be done now unless it is compatible with the federal organisation of the future. In other words, British India as a separate, individual political entity is to cease to exist, sooner or later.

When we look at the matter in this light the temptation becomes irresistible to suggest that the Indian Provinces should, here and now, be made into all-but completely autonomous political units like the American or Australian States, so that their governments will be able to negotiate on more or less equal terms with the rulers of the Indian States who are to be the other constituents of the All-India Federation. The temptation must be resisted. As far as possible, all the different parts of the future All-India Federation must advance in step. From now onwards, efforts should be made to establish links of different kinds between the British Provinces and the Indian States. Material for these links exists in the many common social, economic, and other interests between these different parts of India, and they must be fashioned by such co-operative work as is possible, work for which the scope and opportunities should increase rapidly in the future. Moreover, however autonomous the Provinces may become, the basic functions of a national government will still have to be carried on by some authority

during the period in which the All-India Federation is growing to its full stature. All the considerations to which attention was drawn in discussing the proposals of the Simon Report repeat themselves here in full strength, indeed, with added strength.

Lastly, students of Indian history and conditions know what strong, fissiparous forces exist in India tending to raise up individual, and, even, discordant interests, as between the different Provinces of British India. A period of autonomy, of the kind now under contemplation, would inevitably strengthen these forces, would start the Provinces of British India along different lines of development, create or consolidate local interests, and inevitably raise a new crop of perplexities when the time came at last to draw them into the Federation. Thus, the immediate grant of provincial autonomy would raise as many difficulties as it solves, and, from what has been said above, it is clear that the proposal at present in vogue to apply provincial autonomy piecemeal, so to speak, by granting it to individual provinces

if they choose to ask for it, is also ruled out.

We have seen that it would not be wise to expect the appearance of an All-India Federation as contemplated by the round Table Conference at an early date. A few years, at any rate, must elapse, and, meantime, from the point of view of the British rulers in India, the position is almost wholly unsatisfactory. Some share—as great a share as possible—of the burden and strain of government in India must be passed on to other shoulders. Knowing, as we do, the very formidable difficulties which face us at every step in India's progress towards Dominion Status, or, indeed, responsible self-government, it is quite clear that a strong British element must be retained, for the present, at any rate, both in the public services and in the central and provincial governments. This is necessary, not only because of Britain's own vested interests in the security and welfare of India, but because, for years to come, the presence of a powerful, neutral element is absolutely indispensable. This applies to the provinces with quite as much force

as it does to the central government. Also, in the latter, it is highly desirable to include, as soon as possible, another stable, and to some extent, neutral element, namely, the Indian Princes. Lastly, the Indian element in both the provincial and the central governments should be composed of real political leaders.

As far as the provinces are concerned, the limitations on autonomy should be reduced to an absolute minimum. The ideal should be the application at a very early date of full responsible government in the provinces, with powers, to be thought out and defined, vested in the Governor, so as to enable him to act as *deus ex machina* when necessary. Of course, this assumes a settlement of the minorities problem, which is a very big assumption indeed. Faced with the prospect of real provincial autonomy and assisted by Englishmen who command the confidence of both Hindus and Muslims, and who know the subject thoroughly, there is reason to hope that a determined, continuous effort to reach at any rate enough agreement to allow the new provincial constitutions to start func-

tioning, would be successful. The problems arising out of the relations between the majority community in India and the minorities are not going to be solved by men sitting round a table. They will have to solve themselves as the leaders of the different parties work together responsibly for the common good of all. But before they can begin to work together some minimum of agreement must be reached, and the attempt to reach it should be made in some such manner as is now described. Arbitration by the Prime Minister will not satisfy either side, and may quite conceivably embitter the situation. This, of course, is no reflection of any sort on the Prime Minister. It is no more than saying that this matter is one which is not suitable for arbitration.

This proposed solution for the provinces would go an immense distance towards bringing peace into the government of the country. It would give scope for service, on terms at which none could cavil, to the ablest and most patriotic citizens of India. It would lead to a great quickening of public life, and would immensely en-

hance and speed up the political education of the people.

For the centre, a different kind of proposal has to be made. The people of this country and the Indian political leaders should be asked to realise, and frankly accept, the position that the circumstances of the present time and the next few years in India are, and will remain, unique. A unique arrangement must be devised suitable to them, but let it be emphasised with the utmost possible force, an arrangement avowedly and really no more than transitory. It is to be an arrangement brought into being for the sole purpose of bridging the period which must elapse between now and the coming into existence of the All-India Federation. Let us not trouble ourselves, therefore, with the question of whether the Government of India is to be responsible or responsive, or non-responsible, or anything else. Let us merely ask ourselves if it will be able to perform the work which is expected of it. That work is to bring all the strength and wisdom of India to bear on the problem of her transition from her present position to the

All-India Federation on the basis established by the Round Table Conference.

The Government of India, therefore, should be turned into a Council composed of the best men who can be found. The British Indian representatives and the representatives of the States must be men of influence with their communities and their peers respectively, whilst the British members of the Government must be men of ability, and above all, men who believe in what they are doing. The present number of the Executive Council, which together with the Viceroy, forms the Government of India, is seven. This number should be extended, but not too widely. Twelve would be a good number, of whom four should be British, three should come from the States, and five from British India. These five should be men of political importance, proved leaders of parties. It may be objected that such men would not serve in the Indian Government as proposed. I believe they would, because the sole reason for their serving would be to bring into being, as smoothly and as speedily as possible, the Federation of All-India which

every one of them is pledged to support. The departments of administration, would be allotted between the members of this new Government of India, and it would be a good thing to have at least one without any portfolio who could travel about India and keep himself and the Government to which he belonged fully in touch with developments. He could also interpret to provincial governors and their governments the views of the Government of India. This Council would not be responsible to the Central Legislature, but by virtue of its composition, would be able to control it and receive its support. Of course, there would be very heterogeneous elements in such a body, but there is no reason to doubt that they could all work together, provided they were men fired with the desire to bring into being an All-India federation, trusting each other, and acting in the spirit of give and take. Month by month, the situation in the provinces, in the States, and in Indian politics as a whole would unroll itself, and all the while, these men would be adapting their plans to the situation and the situation to their

plans. In other words, such an arrangement would ensure the maximum amount of natural growth in the constitution as opposed to its construction by definite acts of legislation, based on the results of bargains between different and conflicting interests. Perhaps the most difficult part of this proposal would be getting it accepted by the British Parliament, because it would mean the latter's divesting itself of a great deal of its authority in Indian affairs. Here, again, there need be no formal act of legislation, but there might be a convention, similar to the present fiscal convention, in India. According to the fiscal convention, when the Government of India and the Legislature are in agreement on a matter of fiscal policy, the British Government does not intervene. So it might be in politics.

The argument will no doubt be raised that the Government of India would be largely freed from the limitations on its autonomy which were laid down as necessary by the Round Table Conference. The answer is that the form of Government for India which is now proposed will be

working to bring into being a federal Government of India which itself will be subject to certain limitations, on the lines of those laid down at the Round Table Conference. But the plan now proposed is far more flexible than the present proposal to draw up a federal government of India, complete in all details, including more or less rigid safeguards. For as time goes on, conditions will change, and some of the safeguards will be found either to be not necessary or to be capable of modification. And, the more successfully and harmoniously the members of the Government of India can act together, the more exiguous will the necessity for safeguards of any sort become, until, indeed, they vanish altogether. We have seen that some time must elapse before the federation can come into being, even in the most favourable circumstances, and, meanwhile, the present system of government is functioning with ever-increasing difficulty and against continually growing opposition. We have considered various alternative proposals which have been put forward in various quarters from time to time, and we have seen what very

wide, and in some cases, what insuperable objections to them exist. The proposal now made seems to combine a flexibility and appropriateness to India's present circumstances with an effort once more to bring back all responsible sections of Indian thought into co-operation with the Government, and to make that Government truly a Government of India. The degree to which its Indian members rise to their high tasks and show their readiness to forget old grievances and old prejudices will be the degree to which they will prove themselves worthy of responsibility. The degree to which its British members respond will be the degree to which they will prove themselves and their country worthy of India's trust and affection

Along some such lines as these, all that is best and most responsible in the public opinion of both Britain and India, could move together. No British party is now prepared, or wants, to try to perpetuate autocratic rule in India. Everybody knows that the so-called "Die-hards" have lost their fight, as they have lost every similar fight in which they have engaged in the

past. In India, nobody except the still comparatively few revolutionaries wants anarchy and bloodshed. Surely there is enough statesmanship in Great Britain and India to carry our joint task through to its completion.